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26 November 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Manned Reconnaissance

1. A hold on manned tactical aircraft reconnaissance over the North Vietnam panhandle would severely restrict our ability to assess the logistics flow of supplies from the North to the South. (It would also be read by Hanoi as a political signal that would probably influence Hanoi's policy toward negotiations.) A lack of manned tactical reconnaissance below the 19th parallel would be much less damaging to our ability to detect the movements of military units, and would not take from us significantly relevant coverage for the purpose of detecting new weaponry.

2. Logistics: Chronically cloudy weather continues to frustrate high-altitude photo collection of necessarily detailed logistics intelligence. For logistics assessments we need repeated high resolution photo coverage of many different places and transportation lines. Low-level drones can only supply bits of such information, and those only if they return.

3. Military Posture: Signal intelligence does and would give us adequate information on the movements of regular North Vietnamese ground units. This source alone would not enable us to determine the status of North Vietnamese airfields and air defenses. We need photo intelligence for that purpose, but high altitude drones and Giant Scale probably would suffice. However, given the weather problem, those systems lack the responsiveness of manned tactical reconnaissance against such targets.

4. New Weapons: For the panhandle area, we are most concerned about the possibility of coastal defense missiles being deployed. Other new systems are less likely to be deployed there or are subject to detection by sources other than manned tactical reconnaissance. Should U.S. naval operations be resumed along the panhandle, however, we assume that manned tactical reconnaissance also would resume. In that case, any coastal defense missile sites should be quickly detected.

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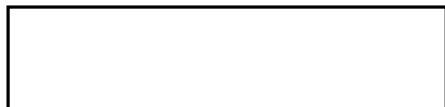
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5. If manned tactical reconnaissance were suspended, we could compensate in part for the loss by using the U-2, which is a flexible system under changing weather conditions. We recognize, however, that no high level photography can substitute for manned low level missions in providing data on logistics.

1-CCPC
1-GAC Chiono
1-VAS/RAC
1-Memas T&F DCI

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26 Nov 68

GACarver, Jr.

Attached for your information are
copies of the two papers we did for
the Director this morning.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

26 Nov 68

Mr. Bruce Clarke, D/OSR

GACarver, Jr.

At 1800 Monday night (25 November) the Director called to discuss a question likely to arise at the 26 November Tuesday lunch: the pros and cons of manned reconnaissance over North Vietnam and the intelligence loss involved should it be suspended. He said he would need a briefing paper on this Tuesday morning.

At 1000, 26 November, I convened Messrs.

STAT [] to review
the bidding. A consensus judgment was swiftly
STAT reached and [] kindly agreed to draft the
memorandum for the DCI. This memo was
delivered to the Director at 1130. He was quite
pleased with it and took multiple copies with him
to the Tuesday lunch.

Attached is a copy of our memo for your
records and information. I am most grateful
STAT for [] assistance.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

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26 November 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. R. J. Smith
Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Memoranda for the Director

1. Two hot grounders were battled at the system late on the afternoon of 25 November. Both were neatly fielded this morning through the team effort that is now almost automatic.

2. Around 1800 on 25 November, the Director indicated he would need two briefing papers to brace him for topics likely to come up at the 26 November Presidential lunch: one on negotiating strategy, the other on our ability to do without manned reconnaissance.

3. At 0930 I convened [redacted] [redacted] to review the negotiations problem. After 20 minutes of discussion, a consensus view was reached which [redacted] agreed to draft as a memorandum for the Director.

4. At 1000 I convened [redacted] [redacted] to discuss the reconnaissance problem. Again, a consensus judgment was soon reached. [redacted] agreed to reduce this to writing with assistance from [redacted]

5. The attached two memoranda were delivered to the Director at 1130. He professed himself pleased with both of them and took multiple copies of each with him to the Tuesday lunch.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

cc: Mr. Godfrey w/atts
Mr. Abbot Smith w/atts
[redacted] w/atts

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26 Nov 68

The Director

GACarver, Jr.

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Attached is a memo on the reconnaissance question drafted by [] (Lookout Committee chairman). It is a joint effort participated in by

[] and myself.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment